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ABSTRACT

A study investigated whether exercises that teach and alert students to nonverbal communication aided them, particularly those students who needed more support in achieving academic success in written expression. Subjects were students in two classes of a basic composition course required in an electronic technician program. One class was given instruction and exercises in nonverbal communication, while the other class did not receive this instruction. The Diagnostic Test for Writers was used as a pre- and post-test to determine students' abilities in written composition. Comparison of test scores found no significant differences in the means between the two groups. However, the students in the lowest sector of the experimental group appeared to benefit from the exercises by improving in their academic achievement. (Three tables of data are included. Two appendixes--containing samples of some of the exercises used in class, and two tables of data--are attached.) (Contains 15 references.) (SR)

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The Effect of Teaching NonVerbal Communication on Academic Achievement in Written Expression

By:
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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts in
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Kean College of New Jersey

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine whether exercises that teach and alert students to non-verbal communication aided them, particularly those students who needed more support in achieving academic success in written expression.

The sample tested was a random population of technical students in a basic-review composition course. A comparison of test scores obtained from The Diagnostic Test for Writers indicated no significant difference in the means between the two groups. However, the students in the lowest sector of the experimental group appeared to benefit from the exercises by improving in their academic achievement.

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Non-verbal communication, those messages expressed by other than linguistic means, is a rich source of constant information that is available to you, for you and about you.

Non-verbal and verbal messages are both indispensable. Most verbal messages reach us one at a time: a word, a phrase, a sentence. With non-verbal communication; however, we are bombarded by multiple channels of continuous, ambiguous information through kinesics (body motion), proxemics (distance), paralanguage, (voice quality), and artifactual (physical characteristics) (Adler, 1990).

The process of communication can therefore be divided into its two components with fifty-five percent attributed to non-verbal components and forty-five percent to verbal (Hall, 1969). The non-verbal component of the communication process weighs heavier than the verbal in conveying information. In order for students to learn, there must be effective communication. It has been shown when teachers are given affective training and taught how to use verbal and non-verbal communications in the classroom more effective student/teacher relationships develop, providing the student with a better environment for affective and cognitive learning. Combine the demands of the communication process verbal and non-verbal, with the process of writing and the difficulties of a learning

disability student, and teachers have a challenge of overwhelming magnitude.

A learning disability is a disorder which selectively interferes with development, interpretation and/or demonstration of language and non-language ability. The condition includes specific deficits in one or more of the following areas: oral comprehension, expressive language, academic skills, sustaining attention, organizing, coordination, integration, perception and social judgement (Learning Disability Association, 1991).
These deficits affect many academic areas and subsequently social situation with each individual being uniquely different.

According to Belinda Shade McGuire, when we ask students to write, we ask them to reveal information about themselves. As suggested in Maslow's hierarchy of learning, we cannot achieve higher levels of learning until certain basics are achieved. Encountering an orderly, reliable, trustworthy environment, gaining control over one's own behavior, and developing receptivity and willingness to interact with the environment to achieve self awareness are factors that are necessary for the student to succeed.

Writing, as been observed, is often a laborious form of communication for learning disabled students because of the demands of writing: the need for acquired knowledge, creativity, organization, memory. Combining the demands of the writing process (the hierarchy for writing such as monitoring self, devising a realistic plan and gaining inner control) with the communication process presents an almost impossible task to achieve. Learning disability students, apparently, do not have the ability to learn incidentally, which is the way non-verbal communication is gained; therefore they are missing fifty-five percent of the process of communication. If they are missing this much information, how can they ever gain inner control over their own writing? How can they be successful?

Teaching non-verbal communication can be a way of increasing academic skills, as well as, providing the student with more positive social relationships. Acceptance by teachers, as well as peers would help students gain confidence which in turn would foster better performance on academic tasks.

Statement of Problem

The effect of teaching non-verbal communication to remedial students may have a positive result on academic achievement in written expression.

Significance of the Problem

The process of communication is 55 percent non-verbal and 45 percent verbal [Hall 1969]. In order for students to learn, there must be effective communications. The non-verbal component of the communication process is as important as the verbal component [Richmond, McCrosky and Payne 1987]. It has been shown that when teachers are given affective training and taught how to use verbal and non-verbal communications in the classroom more effective student/teacher relationships develop, providing better student affective and cognitive learning.

Non-verbal communication is never taught but rather learned incidentally [Walter, 1992]. Learning disability students (remedial students) do not have the ability to learn incidentally; therefore, they are missing 55 percent of the message.

Definitions

1. Non-Verbal Communication - The process of one person stimulating meaning in the mind of another person (or persons) by means of non-verbal messages. [Richmond, McCrosky and Payne, 1987].
2. Kinesics - The process of how you use your body to talk by use of gestures, facial expressions, posture.
3. Proxemics - The term used to describe space and distance, and how we use public, social, intimate, and personal space.
4. Paralanguage - The term used to classify voice quality.
5. Artifactual - The term used to describe physical characteristics of the non-verbal messages: clothing, jewelry, cosmetics.
6. Immediacy - The term used to explain the degree of perceived physical or psychological closeness between people [Richmond, McCrosky, and Payne, 1987].

ASSUMPTIONS

The test used to measure the students' ability in written expression before and after the exercises will be a reliable and valid source of information.

The population of students will be in fact a random sample.

The instructor will in fact teach the two classes of students exactly the same.

The age difference in the group will not have a negative effect on the study.

Limitations

Most of DeVRY's population consists of first generation college students, forty-one percent of whom are members of a minority group. All students are high school graduates or have their GED, and they range in age from eighteen to fifty-two. The typical electronic technician, which is the group the study will be concerned with, is one who never liked or did well in English classes and cannot see the reason for taking the course: They are "hands on" people.

Delimitations

This study was limited to the third trimester electronic technician student at DeVRY Technical Institute.

The classes were set up randomly and large lecture classes were reduced to 20-25 students for English composition classes. The course is a 15 week basic composition course.

Hypothesis

To provide additional evidence concerning this topic, a study was conducted to determine the effect of teaching non-verbal communication on remedial students' ability in written expression. It was hypothesized that no significant difference would result from teaching non-verbal communication on the students' academic achievement.

Procedures

This study was limited to the electronic technician student at DeVRY Technical Institute. Most of the population at DeVRY Technical Institute consists of first generation college students, forty-one percent of whom are members of a minority group. All students are high school graduates or have their GED, and they range in age from eighteen to fifty-two years old. The typical electronic technician, which is the group the study was concerned with, are males who never liked or did well in English classes and cannot see the reason for taking the course: they are "hands on" people.

In the third trimester, the electronic technician program requires a basic composition course (developmental writing). The classes are set up randomly with large lecture classes being reduced to 20-25 students for the basic composition course. The study was concerned with the third trimester students taking English 101.

Specific Methods

The students used in this study were presented with a pre-test to determine their abilities in written composition. The test used for the study was Simon and Schuster's Diagnostic Test for Writers.

Prior to the use of this test in this study, the Dean of General Education at DeVRY Technical Institute did a study to verify the correlation of the scores produced on this test and holistic grading of sample essays by the same students. There was a close correlation between the results of the student's test score and the same student's grade from a holistically graded essay. If a student did well on the test, then his grade on the essay was high. Because of this correlation, the study used the Diagnostic Test instead of a holistically graded essay to ensure objectivity.

The following is a list of items covered in the Diagnostic Test for Writers. The items are (1) commas, (2) apostrophes,

(3) capital letters, (4) quotation marks, (5) pronoun case, (6) subject-verb agreement, (7) adjectives and adverbs, (8) pronoun reference and shifts, (9) fragments, (10) comma splices and fused sentences, (11) dangling and misplaced modifiers, (12) levels of diction, (13) parallelism, (14) transitions, (15) ordering sentences and (16) narrowing topics.

Upon completion of the pre-test, one class of the third trimester students were given instruction and exercises in non-verbal communications, while the other class did not receive this instruction. In both classes the course objectives were met with the same lesson plans, handouts, reading assignments, exercises and instruction. With the experimental group; however, there were additional exercises, handouts, and role-playing involving non-verbal communication. As the students proceeded through the course, periodic discussions concerning the non-verbal exercises were held. (See Appendix A)

Upon completion of the course the pre-test was given as a post-test. The mean scores of the sample were compared and analyzed to determine if there was any significant difference between the means of the two samples.

Results

As can be seen in Table I, there was only a 1.7 point

Table I
Pretest Means, Standard Deviations and t of the samples

	M	SD	t
Experimental Sample N=30	37	5.68	1.23
Control Sample N=32	35.3	9.09	

difference between the samples in favor of the experimental sample on the pre-test results on the Diagnostic Test for Writers. This difference was not significant as shown by the t of 1.23. While the mean scores were similar, the control sample appeared to have a wider score range as its standard deviation was greater, suggesting more variability at the outset of the study.

An analysis of the samples' post-test results as seen in Table II shows that the experimental sample has increased

Table II

Means, Standard Deviation and T of Post-test Results

	M	SD	T
Experimental Sample	41.67	4.40	0.787
Control Sample	34.86	9.08	

its mean to 41.67, a gain of 4.67 points, while the control sample lost a fraction of a point. It can be seen, also, that for experimental sample (4.40) is significantly smaller than that of the control sample (9.08) suggesting less variability. Looking at additional data available, the range of scores, as shows in Table III,

Table III

Range of Score of the Samples

	Pre-test	Post-test
Experimental Sample	19 - 45 = 26	33 - 52 = 19
Control Sample	19 - 50 = 31	21 - 50 = 29

it can be seen that while the lowest achievements of the sample were the same (19) at the outset of the study, individuals in the control sample achieved at somewhat higher levels with the 5 point difference in the ranges of the scores of the samples shown the control sample having more variable and higher achievement levels.

The range of scores on the post-test indicates that the individuals in the experimental group increased by 14 points from their low of 19, while the control sample student made a two point gain in their lowest scores. No apparent improvement in the top score achieved by the control sample is evident, but a 7 point increase is seen for the experimental sample.

Conclusions and Implications

The results of the data indicates that no significant change occurred from pre-test to post-test and thus the hypothesis of the study was accepted. In the experimental sample results, we see a reduction in the standard deviation, suggesting that the students who needed more support moved closer to the mean. This change can be translated into growth in the learning process particularly for the lower ability students or the learning disabled students.
In analyzing what is implied by this phenomena, one has to realize that the groups were true random populations.
No students were classified in terms of learning disabled or developmental.

The process of writing demands an abundance of collective skills of any student, but this is particularly difficult for the learning disability student.

Whether we assess the exercises presented in the research project as beneficial in teaching the students non-verbal communication, or as a "warm-up" in improving student-teacher relationships, better student affective behavior and cognitive learning appeared to have developed among the lower level ability students in the experimental sample.

A tentative conclusion can be drawn that these students, the lower level sector of the random population in the experimental sample, did in fact benefit from the exercises by improving in their academic achievement in written expression.

Due to scheduling problems, many of the students that started in the control group were transferred to the experimental group with the reverse also happening. In a course that lasts fifteen weeks valuable time was lost. It is therefore suggested that the study be replicated avoiding such problems to determine whether the longer instructional period would make a bigger change in achievement.

RELATED LITERATURE

Work related to a study of the effect of teaching non-verbal communications on academic achievement in written expression has been grouped into four general categories: non-verbal communication, the learning disability student in the regular classroom, the deficits in writing exhibited by the student, and remediation strategies for both non-verbal disorders of learning and the deficits in expressive written language.

Although non-verbal communication is not taught, it appears to be an important aspect in the social and academic growth of the student. Since the process of writing is the most demanding of the forms of language, with the lack of growth eluding these students, expressing ideas about themselves or expressing ideas from acquired knowledge escapes them.

The importance of teaching non-verbal communication has gained momentum as shown by the development and publication of lesson plans, films and tests: Dr. Minskoff has researched lesson plans appropriate for each category of non-verbal communication; Edmonson, Leach, Leland, (1969) have established "The Social Perception Training Kit," while Goldstein, (1974) produced "The Social Learning Curriculum."

In 1967, Johnson and Myletrist, in their text, Learning Disabilities: Educational Principles and Practices denoted only one chapter to "non-verbal disorders of learning." Children who exhibit this neuropsychological profile tend to have predictable and persuasive difficulties in personal, social, and academic development. They usually have at least average verbal intelligence but lack the ability to acquire the significance of non-verbal aspects of daily living (Badian, 1986).

The deficits affect many academic areas and subsequently, social situations. The difficulty with learning disabilities is that the disorder is unique to each individual. There are gross generalizations and labels applied, but each student is very different, ranging from having only one deficit to as many different combinations as there are possible.

Although the students may have no serious academic weaknesses, they are referred in school for evaluation quite frequently. In younger children referrals are made due to letter reversals and the slow acquisition of reading and writing; in older students due to problems in arithmetic and written language (Badian, 1986).

Non-verbal behavior is not explicitly taught to children in this culture according to Bryan (1977).

Yet, individual skills in sensitivity, attention, comprehension and responsiveness to non-verbal communication may play an important role in a child's social and academic status. The debilitating effects become apparent when it is recognized that all of the learning disabled individual's social interactions in school, after school and in adulthood are affected (Minskoff, 1980). However, they (learning disabled children) do not perceive their poor social status and overestimate their social acceptance. In searching for courses of social perception disabilities the factor most cited involves the ability to understand and effectively use non-verbal communications (Minskoff, 1980).

What happens to these students in the regular classroom? These students seem unable to interpret the significance of non-verbal communication which conveys the attitudes, feelings and intentions of people. These students who cannot devise meaning from facial expressions, specific gestures and posture or proxemics or paralanguage or artifactuals will also have difficulty in accommodating to varied styles of teaching and discipline (Lipson, Alden, 1983). The language maturity normally gained through experience and social interaction eludes these students.

The learning disabled teenager has a difficult time making and keeping friends and consequently, misses out on the social feedback necessary for continued language refinement (Lipson, Alden, 1983). This growth is essential for developing the tools necessary for written expression.

As shown by Olga Santos (1989) who tested forty high school students on eleven different tests (academic, as well as social skills) the students with learning disabilities were below the performance of the control group on all measures, including non-verbal tests.

How do learning disability students exhibit deficits in written expression? Deficits in written expressive language among learning disabled individuals are often severe, persist into adulthood and are more prevalent than earlier identified reading difficulties (Vogel, Konrad, 1982). When deficits occur in earlier stages of language development--receptive language, expressive language, or reading--we can expect deficits in written expressive language the highest form of the development of language in the learning hierachy, (Vogel, Konrad, 1982).

The characteristics of the written expression of learning disabled students fall into seven different categories: handwriting, spelling, choice of topic, organization, vocabulary, mechanics and general appearance of the paper.

The handwriting of a learning disability student often looks childish: letters may be poorly formed or sprawled unevenly across the page: crude block letter printing frequently may be used.

Spelling errors may be gross, demonstrating little resemblance between the sight of the word and the sound. Basic sight words may be misspelled, such as which (whih), while more difficult words are produced correctly. Reversals of letters, letters arbitrarily repeated or omitted endings are also common spelling problems.

Learning disabled students often select concrete simple topics. The rhetorical patterns of narrative or process are the simplest to handle because an experience or a process are already structured chronologically. Although they may have little difficulty discussing more abstract topics, they may not be able to organize their thoughts easily to set them down on paper, with the organization being frequently disconnected with little logical transition from one point to another.

In most incidents, written vocabulary may not match oral vocabulary. Students are often very aware of their spelling deficiencies and will limit their expression severely rather than risk misspelling.

Learning disabled students have the predictable mechanical errors that any student might demonstrate. Usually, it is a question of degree of difficulty. Besides sentence fragments, mistaken pronoun reference, run-on sentences, misplaced modifiers etc., the learning disabled student may randomly sprinkle capital letters throughout a paragraph, misuse standard end punctuation and use various homonyms creatively--"sun" for "son", "two" for "too" or "to".

Besides the specific items mentioned above, papers of learning disabled students frequently look immature. There are many cross-outs, write-overs and erasures. This is different from an edited paper, where corrections and additions are being made. The appearance of the learning disabled student's paper may signal a person having word to word difficulty (Galotto, 1992).

What is the remediation strategy for these students? Remediation has to be concentrated on two levels: first is the remediation of non-verbal disorder and then the remediation of written expressive language.

The students who exhibit non-verbal disorder have to be explicitly taught what constitutes attention and how to focus it on a specific task at a given time. Children suffering from non-verbal disorder require much patience and skilled help. The focus should be on ways of changing inappropriate behavior through behavior modification, providing aids to daily organization, and teaching personal responsibility through role playing. With young children, training in visual constructive skills, in careful visual observation, and in interpreting emotions and social situations portrayed in pictures or film may be of use (Badian, 1986).

Knowledge of the learning disabled student's specific deficit will be essential in planning the educational program. Frequent review or reteaching may be necessary. Improvement, especially permanent progress is slow and often accompanied by an irregular pattern of growth and regression. Time, concentration, practice, patience, repetition and the use of multisensory approaches are required to help the student conquer these kinds of errors (Vogel, Konrad, 1982).

Further research on this type of child is essential to know what proportion of subjects with learning disabilities exhibiting these constellation of problems can be helped.

Strang and Rourke stress the urgency of developing life skills by referring to their finding that some of the children, as adults, developed debilitating forms of psychopathology.

A complete educational program should include a functional academic program, which stresses social competence, combined with remediation which is designed to treat a student's learning disabilities, and with compensatory teaching, which circumvents the student's disabilities and utilizes his or her learning strengths (Minskoff, 1982).

In terms of remediation of written expressive language, some of the general strategies of patience in teaching, reviewing, reteaching are essential.

In teaching written expressive language, an instructor should approach writing as a multilevel process where the process is more important than the product. By providing opportunities for sustained writing, establishing a writing community, modeling the writing process and strategic thinking and allowing the student to select his/her own topic, a good atmosphere incorporating the writing process is established (Lerner, 1988).

One of the many subskills necessary to teach learning disabled students is spelling. Strategies for teaching spelling are varied to accommodate the learning disabilities student's learning style and deficit.

There are many multisensory methods in spelling using the visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile modalities. The Fernald method is an example of a multisensory approach to teaching, reading, and writing, as well as spelling (Lerner, 1988). Putting spelling words on the filmstrip projector, programmed spelling materials, spell checkers, either through a word processing program or hand-held dictionaries, are all strategies to be used by the learning disabled student who is weak in spelling (Lerner, 1988).

This is only one example of the subskill strategies that must be tackled in order for learning disabled students to improve their writing skills. In planning a program for remediation, individual testing and diagnosis and planning are essential in order to provide the student with the most appropriate individualized program. Along with IEP, much patience, reteaching and reviewing must be incorporated in the program (Vogel, Konrad, 1982).

The written form of language is the highest and most complex type of communication in the hierarchy of the development of language skills; it is the last to be learned. Through writing we integrate previous learnings and experiences in listening, speaking, and reading.

Besides an adequate basis of oral language skills, proficiency in written language requires many other competencies, including the ability to keep one idea in mind while formulating it in words and sentences; skill in planning the correct graphic form for each letter and word while manipulating the writing instrument; and sufficient visual and motor memory to integrate complex eye-hand relationship (Lerner, 1988).

The instructional concept of writing across the curriculum has become a persuasive force in education. Writing is required in all subjects of the curriculum leaving the learning disability students at a terrible disadvantage.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Sample of some of the exercises used.

Preconceived Notion

Objective:

To illustrate how a "mind set" can block simple communication.

Procedure:

Before showing the illustration on the following page, simply state, "Keep the arrow pointing down. If you can read this, please raise your hand, but don't tell anyone else." As you rotate the sheet, say, "You don't have to turn it around as I am doing, but with the arrow pointing downward, can you read what this says?" (Usually 10-15% of a group will have seen this before or will detect the word "FLY" quickly). Acknowledge them immediately, and see it, try looking at the white space rather than the black markings."

Discussion Questions:

1. This type of thing - preconceived notions - is common for most of us. Can you recall an incident where such notions may have caused some concerns?

2. What other barriers cause problems in interpersonal communication? (Noise, disinterested people, wrong methods, etc.)

3. Children see the word "FLY" immediately. Why, then, do adults experience difficulty in seeing it as fast? (We have "learned" to read black print on white paper, such as this page.)

Materials Required:

Sheet like the attached.

Approximate Time Required:

5-10 minutes

Source:

Unknown

Hand Clasp

Objective:

To demonstrate how forced change may cause discomfort and therefore resistance.

Procedure:

In discussing change and acknowledging that many of us admittedly resist any kind of change, suggest that you would like to illustrate your point. Ask the group to simply clasp their hands with their fingers interlocked in a prayerful fashion.

Tell the group to glance down to see how their thumbs and fingers are interlaced. Now, have them pull their hands apart and reclasp them the exact opposite way (i.e., if one's left thumb were on top initially, the right thumb would not be on top.) Point out that for some, this physical change presents no problems, but for most of us. even this slight physical change causes discomfort or simply feels awkward. Therefore, the chances that we will sustain such a behavior are relatively limited.

Discussion Questions:

1. Did any of you feel uncomfortable with your fingers in the new position? Why?

2. "People resist change." Do you agree? If so, why?

3. What are some techniques we can employ to reduce resistance to change?

Materials Required:

None

Approximate Time Required:

5 minutes

Source:

Unknown

A Nonverbal Introduction

Objectives:

1. To demonstrate that communication can sometimes be completely accomplished without words and still be largely effective.
2. To illustrate that interpersonal communication is indeed possible through the use of gestures and other nonverbal methods.

Procedure:

Divide the group into two-person teams. State that the purpose of this exercise is to introduce oneself to his or her partner, but that this entire activity must be accomplished with no words, i.e., completely nonverbally. They may use visuals, pictures, signs, gestures, signals, or anything nonverbal. If necessary, you may offer certain hints, i.e., pointing to a wedding ring to indicate marriage, an in-place running movement to indicate jogging, etc.

After a 2-minute time period allowed for each member of the dyad, have each group then take a few minutes to verbally, "check themselves out," i.e., allow them to verbally state what they were communicating nonverbally.

Discussion Questions:

1. How accurate were you in describing yourselves? (Have them rate themselves on a 1-5 scale.)

2. How accurate were you in "reading" your partner's gestures? (Rate themselves again)

3. What were some of the better clues given by your partner?

4. What barriers or problems seemed to be in our way? (Lack of props, lack of experience with nonverbal communication)

5. How might we eliminate or reduce these barriers?

Materials Required:

None

Approximate Time Required:

10 minutes

Source:

Unknown

"Let's Talk"

Objective:

To break the ice in a group of strangers, or merely to illustrate one's use of gestures and how natural these gestures are to us in verbal communication. This exercise can also demonstrate that verbal communication may become awkward for us when nonverbal gestures or actions are prohibited.

Procedure:

Tell the group that the next few minutes will be devoted to a simple activity wherein they will turn to a person seated nearby and just talk for 2-3 minutes. The subject matter is unimportant; you'd merely like them to converse with someone else (2 to a group) for a few minutes.

After a 2-3 minute period, ask them to stop and tell their partners what they noticed about the other's nonverbal behavior; for example, the person kept fiddling with a pencil, or continually was tapping their fingers, etc. After these gestures have been identified, acknowledge that most of us do these movements almost unknowingly.

After each person has received a "critique" from their partner, tell the group to resume their conversations, but now they must make a conscious effort to use absolutely no nonverbal movements. Have them continue their conversations for 2-3 more minutes.

Discussion Questions:

1. Were most of us really aware or cognizant of our nonverbal movements in the first conversation?

2. Did you find any of your partner's gestures distracting or even annoying?

3. How did it "feel" when we were forced into a strictly verbal discussion? Was the communication as effective without our gestures?

Materials Required:

None

Approximate Time Required:

10-15 minutes

Source:
Unknown

Five Easy Questions

Objective:

To demonstrate that (some) behavior is quite predictable.

Procedure:

Ask the participants to take out a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil. Tell them that they will be asked to name four items very quickly in response to four questions. It is their first reaction that is desired. Then quickly ask them:

1. What is your favorite color?
2. Name a piece of furniture.
3. Name a flower.
4. Pick a number from 1-4.
5. Name an animal in a zoo.

Then display the following answers: Red, Chair, Rose, 3, Lion.

Discussion Questions:

1. How many had each item "correct"? (Ask for a show of hands. A surprising number will have chosen these responses.)
2. What does this illustrate to you? (Some human behavior, attitudes, or reactions are predictable. The key is to be an alert observer - see "Playing Detective" - and/or a statistician. A humorous illustration is contained in the story of the person who noted, that one-half of the high school seniors in Iowa scored below average on a certain test!)

Materials Required:

None, unless a transparency of the questions and answers is desired.

Approximate Time Required:

5 minutes

Source:

Eden Ryl, Ramic Productions, Newport Beach, CA 92660

Count the F's

Objective:

To illustrate that people see what they want to see; items of prominence catch our attention while seemingly less important items may pass on by.

Procedure:

Pass out face-down copies of the following page to the group. When everyone is ready, ask them to turn the paper over and simply count how many times the letter "f" appears on their sheet. Allow only a minute, and then ask, "How many of you have the sheet with the 3 F's?" (Roughly half the group can be expected to so indicate.) "Who has 4 F's on their sheet?...How about 5?...Does anyone have 6?" (About 50% of the group will see only 3 F's, and approximately 10% will see all 6 F's. The rest see either 4 or 5 on the sheet.)

Alternative

Ask those with 4, 5, or 6 F's on their sheets to raise their hands and let those with 3 F's exchange papers so they too can "see" all 6 F's. Most will still have a difficult time identifying all 6 of the F's.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why couldn't all of us initially see all 6 F's? (The F in the word "of" sounds like a "V".)
2. Have you observed situations where only the important things get attention? Who decides what's important?
3. How can we persuade people to pay more attention to detail? Is it always important?

Materials Required:

Card or sheet of paper as shown.

Approximate Time Required:

5-10 minutes

Source:

Unknown

Hand to Chin Exercise

Objective:

To illustrate that actions may speak louder than words.

Procedure:

As you demonstrate, ask the group to extend their right arms parallel to the floor. State, "Now, make a circle with your thumb and forefinger." (As you speak, demonstrate the action.) Then continue, "Now, very firmly bring your hand to your chin." (Note: As you say, "bring your hand to your chin," bring your hand to your cheek, not to your chin.) Pause. (Most of the group will have done what you have, i.e., brought their hands to their cheeks.) Look around, but say nothing. After 5-10 seconds, a few in the group will realize their error and move their hands to their chins. After a few more seconds, more people will join in the laughter, and your point can be verbally reinforced--a trainer's actions may speak louder than words.

Discussion Questions:

1. Did you every hear the saying, "Don't do as I do; do as I say"? Do we practice this as trainers?
2. We all know actions speak louder than words. How can we use this knowledge in our jobs to help ensure better understanding?
3. Communication is always a scapegoat for performance problems. What other barriers to effective communication does this exercise suggest?

Materials Required:

None

Approximate Time Required:

5 minutes

Source:

Unknown

Appendix B

TABLE B-1
EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

Subject	Total #60	Pre-Test	Post-Test
1		40	36
2		27	37
3		41	40
4		36	41
5		36	49
6		32	39
7		45	45
8		38	40
9		42	46
10		42	47
11		40	43
12		42	46
13		37	44
14		26	34
15		39	37
16		19	33
17		43	43
18		36	37
19		37	44
20		41	45
21		44	43
22		38	44
23		41	52
24		31	38
25		37	46
26		33	42
27		39	39
28		40	38
29		31	43
30		37	39

Appendix B

TABLE B-2
CONTROL GROUP

Subject	Total #60	Pre-Test	Post-Test
1		31	41
2		43	44
3		39	43
4		26	30
5		36	44
6		40	48
7		42	45
8		21	32
9		20	21
10		39	41
11		39	27
12		26	34
13		41	42
14		26	47
15		41	45
16		44	50
17		22	35
18		50	48
19		34	36
20		30	40
21		19	27
22		31	43
23		33	37
24		46	49
25		29	38
26		46	45
27		49	47
28		50	46
29		38	45
30		44	50
31		24	29
32		31	36